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CHINA CALLS FOR NURSES

BY PAUL H. STEVENSON

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This is the day of the trained nurse's opportunity in China. Never before, not even in the days of the world war, has there been as great a challenge to the ideals of service as there is to-day in the need of China for Christian nurses. With all the pathos and earnestness with which it formerly called for doctors, this great nation is asking the nursing profession of America to volunteer its best women for the task of training a body of Chinese young women for nurses in the new hospitals throughout the land.

After a half century of strictly pioneer work, the medical profession is beginning to reap its reward in China in no small way. Everywhere the old is giving way to the new, the old mission hospitals and dispensaries are a thing of the past and in their place are springing up new plants and institutions the equal in buildings and equipment to anything in the world. Furthermore, the doctors of China, instead of being all alone in their work with no assistance except that of their own immediate training, are rejoicing in the new day when good modern medical schools are being established and are turning out well trained, bright, and capable Chinese doctors in sufficient numbers to more and more adequately staff the new hospitals. With the knowledge that it can be invested here with the largest returns in service rendered to humanity, money through religious and other channels is coming to China in amounts that would have been unbelievable a few years ago and much of this money is going directly into medical education and the reconstruction and reorganization of medical and hospital work everywhere.

But doctors, good buildings, modern equipment, and ample funds do not make a hospital in China any more than they do in America. There must be nurses. To raise up and train a body of Chinese young women to take their place at the side of their brothers in the healing of their great nation, is the greatest problem of modern medical effort in China to-day. In fact, the next page in the development of hospitals in China must be written by the Christian American trained nurse, and until that task is begun in earnest, the process of hospital development pauses and marks time. Hospital plants well built and equipped will remain with closed doors, awaiting the establishment of training schools for nurses as a necessary part of their life.

But the call of China that sounds so clearly to-day is no ordinary

call for sacrificial service. The specific task that offers its challenge to the American trained nurse in the call for service in China is only a part of the greater problem; that of education among the women of the Far East. The Chinese women, wonderful in their capabilities and amply able to enter into and to hold their own in the new responsibilities that await them in the new China, are rapidly emerging from the position of inequality assigned to them by century old traditions. But the relationships of men and women in Eastern countries and the implications attached to any kind of work as far as the better class of women is concerned, makes the field of nursing a very delicate one. Those who volunteer for this important work, therefore, must be from the very best that our American institutions can turn out, both from the standpoint of training and of personality. The call comes for minds that are plastic and adjustable, souls that are true, and spirits that are unafraid,—for lives big enough to be offered upon the altar of service before a world's need. The call of China to-day is a call for the *investment of life*, where life counts for most while living, and the investment pays the largest dividends in the end.

The call of China to-day is the call of to-morrow's civilization. Politically, economically, and socially, the scene of to-morrow's activity is shifting from the Atlantic to the Pacific, to the very center of the world's crowded stage. All of the possible issues of the new day are bound up in embryo in the younger generation of the Far East, and to him who lives in this vantage area at the present time there comes the incalculable pleasure not only of being an eye witness to, but of actively participating in the working out of these great issues. A life that at home would live out its days in obscurity, lost in the conventional routine of existence, in China becomes not only an active factor in the growth and development of a great people but a vital force producing definite and visible results toward a new world.

No nurse in formulating her plans for humanitarian service can afford to ignore the incomparable advantages that China offers for the investment of her life.